

Message Text

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64

ACTION ACDA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 ERDA-05 CIAE-00 H-02 INR-07

IO-13 L-03 NSAE-00 OIC-02 OMB-01 PA-01 PM-04 PRS-01

SAJ-01 SAM-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 TRSE-00 NSC-05 /092 W

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R 181801Z OCT 76

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2622

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

USDEL MC BRUSSELS

USDEL MBFR VIENNA

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USDEL SALT TWO GENEVA

USNMR SHAPE

CINC EUR VAIHINGEN

SECDEF WASHDC

DIA WASHDC

CINC USAREUR HEIDELBERG

C O N F I D E N T I A L BONN 17623

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, NATO, MBFR, MARR, FR, GW

SUBJECT: REDUCTION OF FRENCH FORCES IN FRG; MBFR

REF: PARIS 30599, DATED 151940Z OCT 76

1. A SENIOR FMOD MILITARY OFFICIAL HAS PROVIDED AN EMBASSY OFFICER WITH FIGURES FOR THE REDUCTION OF FRENCH FORCES IN THE FRG WHICH VARY SLIGHTLY FROM THOSE CONTAINED REFTEL. READING FROM A STAFF PAPER, THE OFFICIAL NOTED THAT THE FRENCH ARMY WOULD BE REDUCED FROM 334,000 TO 311,000, A REDUCTION OF SOME 23,000 OR 7 PER CENT. HE CONTINUED THAT FRENCH FORCES IN GERMANY WOULD BE REDUCED FROM 60,500 TO 46,000, A
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REDUCTION OF 14,000 OR 23 PER CENT.

2. THE OFFICIAL NOTED THAT THE REDUCTION IN THE FRG SHOULD BE KEPT IN TWO DISTINCT CATEGORIES. FIRST, A REDUCTION OF 5,000 IS DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE WITHDRAWAL OF FRENCH FORCES FOR REEQUIPING WITH THE PLUTON. THE SECOND CATEGORY OF 9,000 MEN IS RELATED DIRECTLY TO THE RESTRUCTURING OF THE FRENCH ARMY. THE OFFICIAL SAID THAT THE 9,000-MAN REDUCTION RELATED TO THE RESTRUCTURING REPRESENTED A REDUCTION IN STRENGTH OF SOME 14 PER CENT, TWICE AS MUCH AS THE SIZE OF THE REDUCTION IN FRANCE.

3. WHILE THE OFFICIAL DID NOT DISCUSS THE SERIES OF MEETINGS BETWEEN FRENCH AND GERMAN OFFICIALS WHICH PRECEDED PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE WITHDRAWALS, HE CONFIRMED THAT THE FRENCH ACTION DID NOT COME AS A SURPRISE TO THE FRG. HE STATED THAT THE ONLY SURPRISE WAS THE COMPARATIVE SIZE OF THE REDUCTIONS RELATED TO RESTRUCTURING.

4. THE OFFICIAL SAID THAT DEFENSE MINISTER LEBER WILL TRAVEL TO PARIS THIS WEEKEND TO DISCUSS THE REDUCTIONS WITH FRENCH DEFENSE MINISTER BOURGES. THE OFFICIAL INDICATED THAT LEBER WOULD RAISE THE PUBLIC INFORMATION ASPECT OF THE PROPOSED WITHDRAWALS AND WOULD ALSO ASK FOR AN EXPLANATION REGARDING THE COMPARATIVE SIZE OF THE REDUCTIONS IN THE FRENCH ARMY IN BOTH FRANCE AND THE FRG.

5. THE OFFICIAL SAID THE FRG IS STUDYING THE MILITARY IMPLICATIONS OF THE FRENCH WITHDRAWALS. HE NOTED THAT THE WITHDRAWALS FROM THE FRG WOULD BE CARRIED OUT OVER THE NEXT TWO YEARS, WHEREAS THE REDUCTIONS IN FRANCE WOULD BE EXTENDED OVER A PERIOD OF SIX YEARS. THE OFFICIAL NOTED THAT THE FRENCH HAD INFORMED THE GERMANS

THAT THE FIGHTING CAPABILITY OF FRENCH FORCES IN GERMANY IN THE 1980'S WOULD BE COMPARABLE TO THAT WHICH EXISTS NOW ALTHOUGH THE FORCES WOULD BE FEWER IN NUMBER.

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6. THE OFFICIAL STATED THAT THE REDUCTION OF FRENCH FORCES IN THE FRG WAS NOT RELATED TO THE POOR CONDITION OF FRENCH BARRACKS OR TO MBFR AS REPORTED IN THE FRENCH PRESS. A FONOFF MBFR OFFICIAL COMMENTED THAT THE FRENCH MOVE CONFIRMED FRENCH INDEPENDENCE OF ACTION VIS-A-VIS MBFR BUT ALSO, TO THE BEST OF HIS KNOWLEDGE, WAS NOT RELATED TO THE NEGOTIATIONS.

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